



January 18, 2013

Ms. Christy Ferguson
Director, Rhode Island Health Benefits Exchange
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02908

Dear Ms. Ferguson,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the working draft of the development of the Health Benefits Exchange Contact Center. I write today on behalf of the Rhode Island Health Center Association, which represents Rhode Island's nine community health centers. The community health centers provide high-quality, affordable primary medical, behavioral health and dental care to Rhode Islanders with private insurance, with Medicaid coverage, with Medicare coverage and without insurance. In 2011, the community health centers served over 123,000 patients. About half were publicly insured, one-third were uninsured and one-sixth were privately insured. Over the past several years, the portion of our publicly insured patients has been steady; however we have been seeing more uninsured patients and the portion of our privately insured patients has been decreasing.

The community health centers are looking forward to the fuller implementation of the Affordable Care Act that happens in 2014. Increased access to health coverage for Rhode Islanders through Medicaid expansion and through subsidized insurance available through the Rhode Island Health Benefits Exchange will greatly improve access to health care for our patients and for all Rhode Islanders. While the community health centers serve many uninsured patients and are committed to providing these and all of our patients high-quality primary care, it is our experience that insured patients are able to access necessary medication and specialty services more easily and effectively, and therefore the overall healthcare insured patients receive is usually better. The enrollment process through the Exchange will be critical to ensuring that enrollment in insurance (whether through the Exchange or through Medicaid) is as effective as possible, and is maximized to the greatest extent possible. The call center is one essential component to ensuring successful implementation of the Health Benefits Exchange and of overall health reform.

Our main comments specific to the call center relate to the importance integration with various systems, both current and new. The draft comments reflect recognition of just how important this integration is, and we want to take this opportunity to agree and emphasize this.

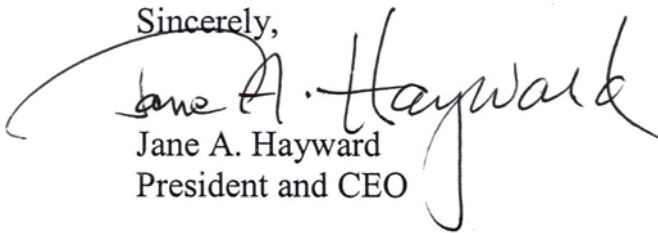
The development of the Exchange and its various functions is an opportunity to build on existing infrastructure in Rhode Island, with the ultimate goal of easy customer-centered access to information and enrollment in affordable health insurance. Rhode Islanders and Rhode Island

employers will access the exchange through the internet, by telephone, and in person. The Exchange is working to develop systems to ensure the accessibility of the Exchange to its customers.

There are many opportunities for the Exchange, and the call center in particular, to build on the existing consumer information and benefit assistance networks in Rhode Island. For example, 211 serves as a call center for Rhode Islanders seeking information about available resources for any number of needs or questions they may have. Also, about 100 Family Resource Counselors (FRCs) are currently available for in-person Medicaid enrollment assistance at 35 locations throughout the state, at hospitals, community health centers and community agencies. The FRCs also screen clients for other benefits, and make referrals for additional services that may be available to assist families. The Health Benefits Exchange has the opportunity to build on and integrate with existing infrastructure in the state, and it is our hope and recommendation that the Exchange benefit from these resources and coordinate with them wherever possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Health Benefits Exchange call center. RIHCA appreciates the change to participate in the process of developing a meaningful, customer-friendly Exchange that will connect Rhode Islanders to health insurance in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jane A. Hayward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "J" that extends to the left and underlines the first part of the name. The signature is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jane A. Hayward
President and CEO